

# Creating Hunting Opportunities for Youth

## The *Massachusetts Young Adult Turkey Hunting Program:*

### A Planning Guide For Sportsmen's Clubs



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## **I. Executive Summary**

The Massachusetts Youth Turkey Hunting Program (“Program”) is a partnership program between the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife (MDFW) the Massachusetts Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation (MA NWTF) and participating Sportsmen’s Clubs. The Program’s purpose is to provide young hunters aged 12-17 an opportunity to learn the basics of turkey hunting and firearms safety in a structured workshop taught by experienced mentors to help pass on the traditions of hunting and the outdoors to interested youth. Young hunters who successfully complete the training program will be eligible to receive a permit to hunt wild turkey under the supervision and guidance of a safe, experienced adult hunter serving as a mentor on a day specifically reserved for youth hunters. The date of the Youth Turkey Hunt is scheduled for the Saturday prior to the last Monday in April. ***All Program participants must have a valid hunter education certificate prior to enrolling in the Program. Safety is first and foremost to the success of the Program.***

The Program is designed to be implemented by participating Sportsmen’s Clubs through guidance from MDFW and MA NWTF. The MA NWTF will assist participating clubs with training, organizing and conducting the Program. MDFW and MA NWTF will provide training materials, including this planning guide, to participating clubs/organizations as well as a hunting safety kit for each youth in the Program.

The Program is open to any club or organization wishing to participate. There are no fees for participation. This guide was prepared by MDFW and the MA NWTF to assist participating clubs in the implementation of the Program. The guide sets forth mandatory requirements and recommendations to assist with your club’s implementation of the Program. Examples of mandatory requirements are the execution of the following legal forms, which are not allowed to be modified:

- 1) The Division Waiver and Release Form***
- 2) The Parental/Legal Guardian Consent Form***
- 3) Youth Registration Form***
- 4) The Release and Indemnification Agreement***
- 5) The Certification of Successful Training Completion Form.***

As noted more specifically in this guide, clubs may customize any or all of the recommendations to fit the club’s resources and manpower, provided that they comply with all applicable local, state and federal laws and the required elements of proper instruction and training at the target range and participation in field safety exercises.

## **II. Introduction**

Historically, hunting and fishing were activities that many young people enjoyed after school and on weekends where opportunities were nearby and readily available. However, lifestyles and family activities have changed over the past several decades as have our land and wildlife resources. Presently, many youths may not have the same opportunities to shoot or hunt as did the youth of a generation ago. In part, this is due to a loss of open space and fewer local opportunities to hunt. The days of walking down the road to the nearby farm or wood lot to hunt after school are all but gone except in the most rural communities. Further, today's youth have many more opportunities and choices as to how they occupy their leisure time, such as video games, organized sports, and school activities. Consequently, participation in traditional outdoor activities such as hunting, fishing, and trapping has declined in many cases.

The Massachusetts Fisheries and Wildlife Board have recognized that the traditions and values of hunting and our outdoor heritage is an integral part of sustaining our conservation ethic. Young people who grow up recreating outdoors tend to maintain a strong conservation and preservation mindset into adulthood. This outdoor heritage and appreciation is critically important to pass on to future generations so as to secure the continued wise conservation, preservation, and management of our natural resources. To further these objectives, in 2008 MDFW promulgated regulation 321 CMR 3.02 (9) (I) that establishes the standards, qualifications and curricula for a mentored youth turkey hunting program for youth aged 12-17, inclusive. The program includes shooting instruction and field safety exercises simulating real turkey hunting conditions. MDFW, through this regulatory authority, has partnered with the MA NWTF to offer the Massachusetts Youth Turkey Hunting Program.

***In order to participate in the Program all youths must have a valid hunter education certificate prior to enrolling in the Program.***

The Program consists of two major components:

- 1) A pre-hunt workshop including shooting instruction and practice at the target range, and field exercises that simulate real turkey hunting conditions and hunting scenarios.
- 2) An actual mentored turkey hunting experience on a day set aside just for young hunters who have successfully completed the pre-hunt workshop.

Clubs must complete the *Certification of Successful Training Completion Form* (contained in the Appendix) for each youth participant who successfully completes the pre-hunt workshop. The completed certification forms must be sent to MDFW. A permit for youth ages 12-14 which includes two turkey tags that are valid for the youth hunt, and the regular spring turkey season will then be added to the young hunter's online license by MDFW. Youth ages 15-17 will receive a youth turkey completion certificate on their online license which will make them legal to hunt on the youth day.

*The permit for the hunt is valid only if the youth is accompanied by an adult with a current, valid Massachusetts hunting or sporting license and turkey permit.*

### **III. Program Development**

The youth turkey hunt program, like the established young adult pheasant hunt program, was developed based on the information obtained in the Division's 2004 human dimensions survey on what young adults and their parents wanted in a youth hunt program. A major finding of the study was that young adults and parents both wanted more than just a day in the field hunting. They wanted a complete program that included the following elements:

- Instruction on firearms safety in the field
- Safe, supervised shooting instruction and practice prior to a hunt
- Lessons on proper hunting ethics and behavior
- Training on hunting regulations and safety
- How to safely clean and properly prepare game
- A safe, supervised hunt under the guidance of an experienced, responsible adult hunter
- Learn how to identify game in the field
- The application of proper field techniques learned in the hunter education course
- Instruction that is hands-on and fun

Using this information, MDFW and MA NWTF developed this Program which includes all of the important elements identified by the young adults and their parents as being necessary for a safe, positive and successful youth hunt program.

### **IV. Shooting Instruction and Practice**

Shooting a shotgun for turkey is very similar to shooting a rifle or muzzleloader because it involves "aiming" with sights at a stationary target, as opposed to wing shooting where the shooter will "point" and "swing" the gun at flying or flushing game. It is a skill best learned and developed through extensive practice at the target range. Consequently, an important component of the Program involves target range instruction on how to properly, safely, and effectively shoot a shotgun for turkey with knowledgeable instructors.

**A. Objective:** To provide youth hunters participating in the Program with the fundamentals of turkey shot-gunning through hands-on instruction and target range practice.

**B. Responsibility:** It is the responsibility of the club to provide shooting instruction and practice time for Program participants at the target range. We all recognize that practicing at the target range is one of the most important elements for developing shot-gunning skills and familiarizing all participants with the safe handling and successful use of shotguns in the field. As part of the Program, the young adults will spend time learning

how to safely and properly shoot a shotgun at the target range with experienced instructors. Make them feel welcome, comfortable and most of all safe. Remember, most of these young adults probably have never had the opportunity to do any formal target shooting before. Assume they do not know anything about target range safety and protocol and start from the beginning. Be sure to cover the fundamentals of firearms safety as well as the basics of shot-gunning including topics like gun fit, choke and ammunition combinations for creating the best pattern possible for your shotgun. You may also want to discuss optics and sights to assist in better aiming. Have extra club members on hand to provide guidance and assistance. The family should be welcomed to attend and watch their youngster's progress as they learn the proper and safe technique of shooting a shotgun for turkey.

Have each participant practice shooting a shotgun at the range prior to the actual hunt. Start by shooting off a bench rest. Explain how the selection of choke and ammunition can alter the pattern and subsequently the effective range of a shotgun at distances up to 40 yards. Using turkey head and neck or standard range paper targets, instructors can illustrate changes in pattern density at various distances from 10-40 yards. Be conscious of shotgun recoil and subsequently flinch, the use of rests, pads etc. may be useful to provide a comfortable introduction to the sensation of shotgun recoil. Provide youths opportunity to shoot and pattern a shotgun at a range of about 20-25 yards. Provide suggestions and corrections in shooting form, and in ammunition and choke selection to ensure adequate field performance and clean humane kill of turkeys.

Participants should also practice shooting at the range from more typical field positions that would simulate their position when actually targeting a turkey in the field. This is because the position they are in can affect the way they hold their shotgun and this can change their point of aim. They should wear similar clothing as they would when they hunt. A hat, head net, gloves or other clothing can affect the way they hold the shotgun. Tell participants they should aim above the feather line on the neck, above the wattles and below the beak. It's best to shoot when the head is raised, rather than while a tom is strutting with his head drawn in against his body. They should be told not to shoot at a turkey over 40 yards away as this will decrease the chance of a quick, clean kill. It is also hard to see a beard at 40 or more yards away in the brush and the beard is the only consistent identifying characteristic of a legal springtime tom. Have the participants practice pacing off 40 yards, to get a better feel for judging the distance.

**C. Schedule:** A good time to offer training and practice to develop safe and effective shooting skills would be in the early spring. A weekend may be a good time to offer this training. Begin advertising the program through your club newsletter and membership in the fall/winter months and begin signing up participants in late winter.

**D. Registration:** Establish a registration deadline at least a week or more in advance so you know how many people to plan for at the range. This will help ensure that you have all the necessary resources, supplies and volunteers needed to provide a safe, fun learning environment at the shooting range.

**E. Equipment:** There are certain basic mandatory safety items that you will need for everyone at the shooting range including eye and ear protection. These safety items are not optional so MDFW and the MA NWTF have included them as part of the hunting safety kit. Some participants may not own a shotgun so consider having shotguns available for use at the range and for the turkey hunt itself. Also, consider providing the ammunition for the participants. Even those that have their own shotgun may not know or have the proper type of ammunition for turkey hunting. It can also get cold on the range in the early spring; so consider having warm refreshments there for everyone.

## **V. Pre-Hunt Workshop Field Exercises**

This part of the Program is designed to provide the young hunters with specialized instruction relative to turkey hunting as well as reinforcing what they learned in the MA Hunter Education Program. Consider the pre-hunt workshop as a “dress rehearsal” for the actual turkey hunt. The workshop consists of field exercises simulating real turkey hunting conditions and scenarios.

By getting outdoors and practicing in the field, young hunters will learn where and how to properly set up, how to call birds, determine safe zones of fire, and understand shoot/don’t shoot scenarios (properly identifying your target, always being aware of obstacles and sighting past your target). In addition, the appropriate clothing and gear necessary for a safe and productive turkey hunting experience will be discussed and demonstrated during the field exercises. Hunting regulations and ethics must be discussed throughout the various activities of the workshop.

**A. Objective:** To provide young hunters with an opportunity to advance what they learned in the MA Hunter Education Program by providing them with specific knowledge and practice for a safe turkey hunting experience through field exercises simulating real hunting conditions.

**B. Responsibility:** It is the responsibility of the club as part of the Program to organize and conduct a pre-hunt workshop. This is a hands-on field workshop that prepares young hunters for the actual turkey hunt through the exercises that simulate real hunting conditions. Remember, young people learn best by doing. Make the workshop hands-on and fun. Keep the topics of discussion short, simple and to the point. If there is too much talk, they will lose interest. The required learning exercises for the pre-hunt workshop consist of five major topics:

- 1) Gear and Clothing for Turkey Hunting
- 2) Turkey Calls and Calling
- 3) Defensive Turkey Hunting
- 4) Safe zones of Fire
- 5) Shoot/Don’t Shoot Scenarios (target identification).



Consider establishing instructional teams and assigning a specific topic to each team for the pre-hunt workshop. Each instructional team will teach a specific learning objective for their assigned topic to participants

**C. Registration:** Establish a registration deadline a minimum of two weeks or more in advance of your field workshop so you know how many people to plan for in your workshop. This will help ensure that you have all the necessary resources and volunteers needed to appropriately conduct the workshop. Encourage the family to participate in the workshop as well. Have a cookout and make it a fun family day.

**D. Schedule:** As previously stated, the purpose of the pre-hunt workshop is a “dress rehearsal” for the actual turkey hunt. Your club should plan enough time for the workshop, either as a one or two day program, preferably on a Saturday or a Sunday.

***Remember, participating clubs and organizations must provide MDFW with properly completed copies of the Certification of Successful Training Completion Form for each participant no later than two weeks prior to the day of the youth turkey hunt in order for MDFW to process permits.***

Have a centrally located check-in area the day of the field workshop where everyone can assemble and receive instructions and information. It should be well-marked and easy to find. Ensure that everyone has registered for the workshop and you have all the necessary signed consent and participation forms.

Being well organized and prepared is important to keep things running smoothly and to cover all the activities and lesson plans within a reasonable period of time. You should have a detailed schedule for the entire workshop. The schedule should list all of the activities, times, locations and the person in charge of each activity.

## **VI. Required Learning Exercises for Pre-Hunt Workshop**

The following section provides the required learning exercises for the pre-hunt workshop. It is a hands-on workshop that prepares the young hunters for the turkey hunt through exercises that simulate real hunting conditions in the field. These exercises are designed to provide the most effective means for young people to gain the knowledge and skills needed in turkey hunting. The exercises also provide excellent guidance for the adults who are instructing the young hunters. The format provides adults serving as instructors, all the information and materials needed to perform the learning exercises.

Again, this is a hands-on workshop that prepares the young hunters for the actual turkey hunt through exercises that simulate real hunting conditions.

### **1. Gear and Clothing**

#### **A. Learning Objective**

Students should be able to list the primary gear and items needed for a safe and effective turkey hunt and should also be able to explain the importance of each item.

### **B. Materials:**

Consider having the following items available for the young hunters to see first-hand:

1. Protective eyewear
2. Camouflage clothing (pants, shirt, coverall or bib-overall), hat, gloves, and mask.
3. Boots (waterproof and comfortable), **Do not wear white socks!**
4. A number of thin layers of clothing rather than a heavy coat. Stress **no brightly colored layers** that may be visible to a turkey and **stress not wearing red, blue or white.**
5. Camouflage turkey vest.
6. Pack a camouflage rain suit, if needed.
7. Firearm should be a 12 or 20 gauge shotgun
8. Correct ammunition for the firearm, #4-#6 is legal in MA for turkey hunting.
9. Knife
10. Water bottle, protein bars or some other snack(s).
11. Correct choke tube for the shotgun.
12. Shotgun sling.
13. Insect repellent.
14. Turkey calls.
15. Hunting license and turkey permit.
16. GPS and/or compass and area map(s).

### **C. Procedure:**

Hold up and identify each item, explaining the importance of it. Explain that while they may not need every item on the list to turkey hunt, any given situation can make them wish they had packed their turkey hunting vest more completely.

## **2. Turkey Calls and Calling**

**A. Learning Objective:** Young hunters will learn the sounds that turkeys use to communicate and how to imitate the basic calls used in turkey hunting.

### **B. Materials:**

- Mouth diaphragm
- Box call
- Slate call
- Owl call
- Crow Call

### **C. Procedure:**

- (a) Describe the three basic styles of turkey calls (box, slate and mouth diaphragm)
- (b) Demonstrate the different turkey sounds, e.g. gobble, yelp, cluck, purr, etc.
- (c) Explain the difference in the various sounds and what they mean.

- (d) Explain and demonstrate locator calls (owl and crow)
- (e) Pass around the box and slate calls allowing the young hunters to practice a couple of the main calls used in turkey hunting. Consider having a calling contest for a little fun among the young hunters.

### **3. Defensive Turkey Hunting**

#### **A. Learning Objective:**

Young hunters must demonstrate where and how to set up and safely and ethically hunt for wild turkey.

#### **B. Materials:** Full turkey hunting clothing and gear

#### **C. Procedure:**

- (a) Select the largest stump, blow-down, tree trunk or rock that is wider than your shoulders and higher than your head to place your back against when calling; a hunter is more likely to spot another hunter when moving to the front or side than from behind.
- (b) Eliminate the colors white, red, black and blue from your hunting outfit; this includes handkerchiefs, socks, underwear, etc. These are the colors of a turkey gobbler.
- (c) Select your calling spot in open timber rather than thick brush; eliminating movement is a key to success, not concealment.
- (d) Be discreet when imitating the sound of a gobbling turkey.
- (e) A good woodsman can always detect movement in the forest by watching other game or listening for the alarm cries of Blue jays, crows, squirrels or woodpeckers. Be alert.
- (f) When songbirds, crows or turkeys cease vocalizations, be aware. There's a good chance another hunter is nearby.
- (g) Never move, wave or make turkey sounds to alert another hunter of your presence. Remain still and speak in a loud, clear voice to announce your presence. And last, but equally important, discuss how to be an ethical turkey hunter.

### **4. Safe Zones of Fire**

**A. Learning Objectives:** Young hunters must demonstrate how to determine safe zones of fire for each person in a two person turkey hunting party.

#### **B. Materials:**

- (a) Actual firearms planned for use in the turkey hunt.
- (b) Set of multiple hen and jake decoys.
- (c) Seat(s) or turkey vest seat(s).
- (d) Index cards and pen(s) or pencil(s).
- (e) A small ball

#### **C. Procedure:**

In most hunting situations there is a limit to the number of people who can safely hunt together. For this hunt, a mentor can accompany only one young hunter at a time to ensure safety and full attention of the mentor at all times during the hunt. However, this exercise will demonstrate how to safely hunt under a two person scenario. Cover the following:

1. Have two young hunters apart from one another but never so far apart that they see each other. This also applies to the licensed adult mentor who the youth turkey hunter during the hunt. They can also sit side by side they so choose.
2. If hunter is right handed, the left shoulder should be pointed toward the expected line of approach of a wild turkey.
3. Explain that each hunter has a zone of fire approximately 45 degrees in front or from 10:30 to 1:30 on an analog clock face.
4. Demonstrate a method for finding your zone of fire. Ask the young adult hunters to look straight ahead and extend their arms out to each side parallel to their chest and make a fist with the thumb held straight up. Tell them to slowly move their arms toward the front until the thumbs are clearly in focus without moving their eyes. This exercise helps young hunters understand why zones of fire are set at 45 degrees.
5. Have two young hunters each with an unloaded firearm, line up or be seated as if their back(s) were to a tree, abreast approximately 20 feet apart. You may space them closer for instructional purposes. Ask each to demonstrate his/her zone of fire. From behind them, toss the ball into different zones. Tell the young adult hunters that if it is in their zone, point at it with their firearm. Emphasize the importance of this drill by explaining that a great many hunting accidents are the result of hunters not respecting their zones of fire and when not identifying a target properly.
6. Repeat step 5 until all young adult hunters has performed the task successfully.

## **5. Shoot/Don't Shoot Scenarios**

**A. Learning Objectives:** Young hunters must demonstrate how to safely judge where and when not to shoot at a turkey and where to place their shot when they decide to shoot.

### **B. Materials:**

- (a) Actual firearms planned for use in the turkey hunt.
- (b) Set of multiple hen and jake decoys.
- (c) Seat(s) or turkey vest seat(s).

### **C. Procedure:**

- (a) Deploy a decoy spread near a set up location consisting of several hen and gobbler (Jake) decoys. Place visible numbers on each of the decoys. This will make the review and discussion process easier. Ask each young hunter to explain if they would or would not shoot, each of the decoys. After, review the answers

with them and tell them why they should or should not shoot each of those turkeys. Setting up other objects in the line of fire or beyond the target is a way of demonstrating proper identification of a target and what lies beyond, in a shoot/don't shoot scenario.

(b) Walk through various hunt scenarios with the young hunters and provide advice on several topics. For the shoot/don't shoot scenario, the students need to be coached on several important points. Before they take a shot, they should answer yes to questions (1) through (4).

(1) Have they positively identified their target and beyond?

(2) Is the shot safe in terms of maintaining their zone of fire and knowing where their hunting partners are?

(3) Is the shot legal considering the distance to surrounding roads and the distance to inhabited buildings?

(4) Is the shot safely and responsibly taken within the effective shot range and in a manner which will result in a clean kill; (e.g.) head and neck shot for a wild turkey.

(5) Ask the young hunters to identify shots that should not be taken; (i.e.) hens, uncertainty of the sex of the bird, shots outside their zone, obstructions, outside of proven range of their firearm, birds on the roost, inability to identify their target.

(6) Ask the young hunters to determine the appropriate time to load the firearm and the appropriate time to unload the firearm.

(c) Repeat steps (1) through (4) until all the young hunters have performed the tasks successfully.

➤ ***The following page offers scheduling suggestions for planning and conducting the shooting instruction, target practice and pre-hunt field exercises workshop over a weekend period. You are free to develop and use your own schedule based on whatever works best for your club and program participants.***

## **VII. Program Scheduling Suggestions**

**One-Day Scenario:** *a.m. - Shooting Instruction and Practice.*  
*p.m. – Field Exercises – Hunting Safety and Success*

**9:00 a.m.** – Check in at the clubhouse

Provide coffee, milk, hot cocoa and donuts, etc.

**9:15 a.m.** – Conduct a general orientation for the group. Explain the agenda for the day.

**9:30 a.m. – 12:00** Shooting Instruction and Practice

**Noon** – Lunch break

**1:00 p.m.** – Hunting Safety and Success - Field Exercises

- 1) Gear and Clothing
- 2) Turkey Calls and Calling
- 3) Defensive Turkey Hunting
- 4) Safe Zones of Fire
- 5) Shoot/Don't Shoot Scenarios

**4:00 p.m.** – Show the NWTF Turkey Hunting Success and Safety DVD and discussion regarding DVD.

**5:00 p.m.** – Instructor wrap up

**Two-Day Scenario:** *day one - Shooting Instruction and Practice*  
*day two - Field Exercises – Hunting Safety and Success*

### **Day One:**

**9:00 a.m.** – Check in at the clubhouse

Provide coffee, milk, hot cocoa and donuts, etc.

**9:15 a.m.** – Conduct a general orientation for the group. Explain the agenda for the day.

**9:30 a.m. – 12:00** - Shooting Instruction and Practice

**Noon** - Lunch

**1:00 p.m.** – Instructor wrap up

### **Day Two:**

**9:00 a.m.** – Check in at the clubhouse

Provide coffee, milk, hot cocoa and donuts, etc.

**9:15 a.m.** – Conduct a general orientation for the group. Explain the agenda for the day.

**9:30 a.m.** – Show the NWTF Turkey Hunting Success and Safety DVD.

**Noon** – Lunch Break

**1:00 p.m.** Field Exercises -Hunting Safety and Success

- 1) Gear and Clothing
- 2) Turkey Calls and Calling
- 3) Defensive Turkey Hunting
- 4) Safe Zones of Fire
- 5) Shoot/Don't Shoot Scenarios

**4:15 p.m.** – Instructor wrap up and cleanup

### **VIII. One Day Mentored Youth Turkey Hunt**

This part of the Program brings all of the components together. The young hunter, along with a responsible, experienced hunter serving as mentor, will have the opportunity to hunt turkey on a special day set aside just for youth. This day is open only to those young hunters who have successfully completed the first two parts of the program and have received their permit from MDFW. Youth participating in the hunt must be accompanied by an adult (18 years or older) with a current valid Massachusetts hunting or sporting license **and** a turkey permit. An adult may mentor only one young hunter at a time. Mentors are permitted to call birds for the young hunters. Mentors are also permitted to carry the firearm for the young hunter to and from the hunting site but they are not permitted to discharge the firearm or shoot a bird for the young hunter. The limit is one bird per young hunter per day.

*If a young hunter takes a bird, he or she will be required to report their harvest either online or at a physical game check station. This must be completed within 48 hours.*

*Adults serving as mentors for the hunt will NOT have to use one of their own turkey tags if a young hunter takes a bird.*

12-14 year-old hunters do not need a hunting license or F.I.D. card. If the young hunter is between the ages of 12-14, inclusive, he or she will receive a special permit along with two tags, one for the youth turkey hunt day and/or the regular spring turkey season, and the second tag is valid only for the spring turkey season.

Young hunters, 15-17 years of age, in addition to the special youth hunt permit, will also need the following to participate in the youth turkey hunt:

- 1) a Massachusetts hunting license
- 2) a F.I.D. card
- 3) the standard wild turkey permit (permit fee \$5.00) from MDFW (15-17 year-olds will not receive an additional turkey tag for the special one day hunt).

15-17 year olds will be required to use one of their two tags which come with their standard turkey permit if they take a bird the day of the hunt. They will still have the opportunity to take another bird using their second tag during the regular seasons.

**A. Objective:** To provide the opportunity for young hunters who have successfully completed the shooting instruction, target practice and the pre-hunt field workshop to spend a Saturday morning in the outdoors hunting wild turkey under the watchful eye of an experienced hunter serving as a mentor.

**B. Responsibility:** It is the responsibility of the club to provide volunteers to serve as mentors on the day of the hunt to the young adults that have successfully completed the pre-hunt field workshop and practiced their shooting skills at the target range. Consider using club members that helped with the first two parts of the program as mentors for the

hunt. Parents, relatives, guardians, friends or neighbors as well as club members can also serve as mentors provided they have a current valid Massachusetts hunting or sporting license **and** turkey permit.

***Mentors provide the hunting locations where they will take the young hunters on the day of the hunt.*** Consider taking the young hunter to your favorite turkey hunting location, but keep in mind that it is the mentor's responsibility to comply with all applicable federal, state and local laws when selecting a location for the hunt.

**C. Schedule:** Mentors should make specific arrangements with their young hunters relative to when and where to meet on the day of the hunt.

**D. General Considerations:** Provide young hunters with a check list of what to bring with them the day of the hunt. Be sure the young hunters have their permit and tag. If they are 15 to 17 years old, they must also have their F.I.D. card and hunting license as well as their turkey permit with them on the day of the hunt. Make provisions for inclement weather. Consider bringing extra clothing and gear, ammunition, snacks, drinks, and a field lunch.

**E: Wrap Up:** Consider getting everyone together the following weekend to share their outdoor experiences with one another. Have a cookout and make it a family event.

## **IX. Required Program Forms**

Because clubs and organizations are responsible for administering the Program, including providing for the safety of all participants, the following legal forms (***located in the appendices of this guide***) must be properly completed and returned to MDFW. MDFW strongly encourages all participating clubs and organizations to have their legal counsel examine the forms prior to use. ***These forms are not allowed to be modified:***

- 1) Division Waiver and Release Form**
- 2) Parental/Legal Guardian Consent Form**
- 3) Youth Registration Form**
- 4) Release and Indemnification Agreement**
- 5) Certification of Successful Training Completion Form**

*Please be advised that the coordinating club on behalf of each would-be participant which has not provided the Division with the properly completed original copies of the 5 above listed forms will not be eligible to participate in the program. MDFW will not issue a permit to any youth for the special one day turkey hunt if it does not have the original copy of the properly completed Certification of Successful Training Completion on file for that youth.*

MDFW has also included several other legal forms in the appendices of this guide for use by clubs and organizations offering the program. As to these other forms, participating clubs and organizations may propose changes to the forms to meet their own needs, provided that any changes are first approved in writing by MDFW.



- a. Request for Turkey Hunting Safety Kits
- b. Program Participant Survey
- c. Volunteer Request Form
- d. Volunteer Conduct Guidelines
- e. Emergency Medical Authorization Form

## **X. Suggested Planning Timeline and Committees**

### **By the end of February**

- Establish the Program Coordinator for the club.
- Determine date(s) and locations for both the shooting instruction and training as well as the pre-hunt field exercises workshop. Alternative dates in case of inclement weather should also be set. **(Dates should be scheduled allowing the club enough time to complete and return to MDFW all Certification of Successful Completion of the Program Forms for each participant no later than two weeks prior to the youth turkey hunt which is scheduled as the Saturday prior to the last Monday in April.**
- Identify a committee to plan, advertise and implement the shooting instruction and training at the target range and the pre-hunt field exercises.
- Begin to line up *mentors for the hunt*.

### **By the end of March**

- All youths planning to participate should be registered with the club.
- Submit copies of the following properly completed forms to MDFW:

- 1) Division Waiver and Release Form
- 2) Parental/Legal Guardian Consent Form
- 3) Youth Registration Form
- 4) Release and Indemnification Agreement

- All volunteer instructors for the shooting instruction, target practice and field exercises should be identified as well as an adult mentor for each participating youth.

### **Two weeks before the Pre-hunt Workshop**

- Participants should be provided a check list of what gear and items to bring for pre-hunt workshop as well as for the actual turkey hunt.

### **Three weeks before the day of the Youth Turkey Hunt**

- The club should have successfully implemented the shooting instruction and practice at the target range, the field exercise workshop and returned all completed *Certification of Successful Training Completion Forms* for each participant to the Division.

## **XI. Frequently Asked Questions**

### **What is the Massachusetts Youth Turkey Hunt Program?**

The Massachusetts Youth Turkey Hunt Program is a partnership between the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife (MDFW) and the Massachusetts Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation (MA NWTF) to provide young adults (ages 12-17) an opportunity to participate in a mentored hunt for turkey on a special day set aside just for youth. The program is designed to be implemented by Sportsmen's Clubs to help pass on the traditions of hunting and the great outdoors to interested young adults in their local communities. Clubs provide shooting instruction and practice at the target range, conduct the pre-hunt field workshop on turkey hunting and safety and provide experienced adult hunters to serve as mentors for the hunt.

### **What does our Club have to do to participate in the program?**

Because clubs and organizations are responsible for administering the Program, including providing for the safety of all participants, the following legal forms (located in the appendix section of this guide) must be properly completed and returned to MDFW. MDFW strongly encourages all participating clubs and organizations to have their legal counsel examine the forms prior to use. *These forms are not allowed to be modified:*

- 1) Division Waiver and Release Form**
- 2) Parental/Legal Guardian Consent Form**
- 3) Youth Registration Form**
- 4) Release and Indemnification Agreement**
- 5) Certification of Successful Training Completion Form**

MDFW and MA NWTF will provide training materials to participating clubs/organizations as well as a hunting safety kit for each youth in the program. The MA NWTF will assist participating clubs with training, organizing and conducting the program. All youth successfully completing the program will be issued a special permit from the Division to participate in the youth hunt.

### **What is a mentored hunt?**

A mentored hunt is a hunt where the young hunter is accompanied by an experienced adult hunter (18 years of age or older). All participants must be accompanied by an adult on the day of the hunt. The adult must have a current Massachusetts hunting or sporting license and a turkey permit.

**How do we find volunteers to serve as mentors?**

Ask club members that helped with the shooting instruction and practice or the pre-hunt workshop to serve as mentors for the actual turkey hunt. Parents, relatives, guardians, friends or neighbors can also serve as mentors. Mentors must be at least 18 years old and have in their possession a current, valid Massachusetts hunting or sporting license and turkey permit issued by MDFW. Individuals simply observing the hunt (i.e., an interested parent wishing to watch their child hunting) do not require a hunting or sporting license.

**How many young hunters can a mentor take on the hunt?**

An adult may mentor only one young hunter at a time.

**What is the bag limit?**

There is a one bird bag limit on the day of the special hunt.

**If a young hunter gets a turkey, does he/she need to take it to a check station?**

Yes, they need to take the bird to a check station within 48 hours. They also may report their harvest online within 48 hours.

**If I mentor a youth in the program and the youth bags a turkey, do I have to use one of my turkey tags?**

No. 12-14 year-old hunters will receive two turkey tags (one tag which is good for the youth hunt and/or the regular spring turkey season, and a second tag which is only good for the regular spring turkey season) along with their permit for the hunt from MDFW. 15-17 year-olds will be required to obtain a turkey permit from MDFW. They will not receive an additional turkey tag from MDFW for the youth hunt. They will be required to use one of their two tags which come with their permit if they take a bird the day of the hunt.

**Are there any special requirements for the young adults that would like to participate in the turkey hunt?**

Yes. They must be between the ages of 12-17, inclusive, and have successfully completed the hunter education program, the shooting instruction and practice at the target range, and pre-hunt field workshop. After completing the shooting instruction and practice and pre-hunt field workshop, each participant will receive a special permit from

MDFW to participate in the hunt. Each young hunter must be accompanied by an adult (18 years or older) who has a current valid Massachusetts hunting or sporting license **and** a Massachusetts turkey permit.

12-14 year-old hunters do not need a hunting license or F.I.D. card. They will receive a special permit along with two tags for the youth hunt from the DFW. One tag will be valid for the youth hunt day and/or the regular spring turkey season, and the second tag is valid only for the spring turkey season.

Young hunters, 15-17 years of age, in addition to the certificate on their license, will need the following to participate in the hunt:

- 1) a Massachusetts hunting license
- 2) a F.I.D. card
- 3) the standard turkey permit and tags (permit fee \$5.00) from MDFW (15-17 year-olds will not receive an additional turkey tag for the special one day hunt).

15-17 year olds will be required to use one of their two tags which come with their standard turkey permit if they take a bird the day of the hunt. They will still have the opportunity to take another bird using their second tag during the regular season.

### **How much time does it take to run the turkey pre-hunt workshop?**

The workshop is designed to be hands-on and fun including shooting practice and field exercises that simulate real hunting conditions. Depending on how your club prefers to organize the pre-hunt workshop, it may take one or two days (preferably on a Saturday and/or Sunday).

### **Can a young hunter participate in the program more than once?**

Yes. As long as they are between the ages of 12-17, inclusive, they may participate as many times as they wish. Youth are not required to repeat the shooting and pre-hunt workshop training. MDFW will maintain a database with all the names of the young hunters that have successfully completed those elements of the program. Youths must, however, get a permit from MDFW each year to participate in the hunt and must still be accompanied by a licensed adult on the hunt.

### **As a mentor, can I carry a gun on the hunt?**

You can carry the gun for the young hunter to and from the hunting site but you cannot carry a firearm for yourself. You are not permitted to discharge a firearm or shoot a bird for the young hunter. You can, however, call birds for the young hunter. Mentors are there only to assist.

**Where do we take the young adults to turkey hunt?**

*Mentors are responsible for locating hunting spots for the program participants.*

Consider taking the young hunter to your favorite turkey hunting location. You can also hunt any of the MDFW wildlife management areas, private land open to hunting, or private land for which you have permission from the landowner to hunt. Your local district wildlife office may also be able to assist you in locating a spot to hunt.

## **Division Release and Waiver Form**

In consideration of the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife's participation in the Massachusetts Youth Turkey Hunting Program I, \_\_\_\_\_, being the authorized legal representative of and having the authority to execute this Release and Waiver on behalf of the club, do hereby release, acquit and discharge the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, acting by and through the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife within the Department of Fish and Game and its officers, employees and agents (Commonwealth), from any and all claims and demands of whatever nature arising out of the club's participation in the Massachusetts Youth Turkey Hunt Program (program).

I hereby further covenant and agree on behalf of the club, that the club shall indemnify and hold harmless the Commonwealth from and against any and all claims, liabilities and costs for any personal injury, death, property damage or other damages or loss that arise directly or indirectly out of or in connection with the club's participation in the Massachusetts Youth Turkey Hunt Program, including but not limited to the club's negligence, reckless or intentional conduct. The club shall at no time be considered an agent or representative of the Commonwealth. After prompt notification of a claim by the Commonwealth, the club shall have an opportunity to participate in the defense of such claim and any negotiated settlement agreement or judgment. This hold harmless and indemnity agreement shall include indemnity of the Commonwealth against all costs, expenses and liabilities incurred in connection with any such injury, death, loss or damage or in defense of any claim or claims on account thereof, including reasonable attorney's fees.

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature and title**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date:**

**COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS** \_\_\_\_\_, ss. On this day before me, the undersigned notary public, personally appeared \_\_\_\_\_, proved to me through satisfactory evidence of identification, which was ☐ photographic identification with signature issued by a federal or state governmental agency, ☐ oath or affirmation of a credible witness, ☐ personal knowledge of the undersigned, to be the person whose name is signed on the preceding or attached document, and acknowledged to me that he signed it voluntarily for its stated purpose.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Notary Public

SEAL

Expires: \_\_\_\_\_ My \_\_\_\_\_ Commission

## **Youth Participant Registration Form**

Youth participant's full name (*print*): \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/legal guardian's name (*print*): \_\_\_\_\_

Please describe the youth's experience in shooting and hunting (no shooting experience, some shooting experience, first-time hunting, some experience hunting, first time hunting turkey, etc.)? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

*I understand and agree that by signing this registration form I will follow all safety precautions as they are explained to me.*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Youth Participant's signature*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Date*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Parent/legal guardian's signature*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Date*

## **Parental/ Legal Guardian Consent Form**

I, \_\_\_\_\_ the parent/legal guardian  
of \_\_\_\_\_ (child) desire to have my child participate in  
the Young Adult Turkey Hunt Program (program) held by the \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ Club, and hereby consent to my child's participation  
in the program and grant the club the unconditional right to use my child's name, voice  
and photographic likeness in connection with articles, press releases and audio/video  
productions resulting from this event.

In giving my consent for my child to participate in the program, I understand that hunting is a sport involving firearms which, if mishandled can be dangerous and cause serious injury and/or death to my child or others. I understand and agree that my child will use utmost care during his/her participation in the program, and agree that he/she will adhere to the standards, guidelines and requirements of hunting and firearms safety. I understand and agree that my child will follow the safety instructions given to him/her by the club, its members, agents, employees, instructors and volunteers. I understand and agree that the club reserves the right to remove my child from the program if, in their opinion his/her safety or the safety of others is jeopardized. I understand and agree that I or another adult authorized by me shall be present with my child during all activities and events of the program.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



## **Release and Indemnification Agreement**

In consideration for, and as an inducement to the \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Club (club) allowing my child to participate in the Youth Turkey Hunt Program (program), and recognizing that my child's participation in the program involves the use of firearms I, \_\_\_\_\_, parent/legal guardian intending to be legally bound, hereby, for my child, myself, my heirs, executors and administrators, voluntarily assume all risks of accident, injury or death and release and forever discharge the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, acting by and through the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife within the Department of Fish and Game and its officers, employees and agents (Commonwealth), the club and their officers, agents, employees, volunteers and assigns (collectively, the parties) of and from any and all claims, debts, demands, actions, causes of actions, suits, dues, sum and sums of money, accounts, reckonings, bonds, specialties, agreements, promises, doings, omissions, damages, executions and liabilities of whatsoever kind and nature, including but not limited to any and all liability for personal injury, death or property damage of any kind, both at law and in equity, and any that have been or may be claimed before any governmental agency, which have arisen or may arise as a result of or in association with my child's participation in the program.

I hereby further covenant and agree that I shall save the parties harmless and shall indemnify the parties from and against any and all claims, liabilities and costs for any personal injury, death, property damage or other damages and loss that arise directly or indirectly out of or in connection with my child's participation in the Massachusetts Youth Turkey Hunt Program, including but not limited to the parties' negligence, reckless or intentional conduct. I further agree that the club shall at no time be considered an agent or representative of the Commonwealth. This hold harmless and indemnity agreement shall include indemnity against all costs, expenses and liabilities incurred in connection with any such injury, death, loss or damage or in defense of any claim or claims on account thereof, including reasonable attorney's fees.

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Date

## Young Adult Turkey Hunting Training Program Certificate of Successful Completion

The below named youth has successfully completed the training program and field exercises as required by the Code of Massachusetts Regulations, 321 CMR 3.02(9)(l) and when signed below by the club program coordinator, is eligible to participate in the mentored youth hunt for turkey as set forth in 321 CMR 3.02(9)(b) and (l).

Name of Youth: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Town \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Hunter Ed Certificate Number: \_\_\_\_\_ F.I.D. Number (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

Hunting License Number (required for ages 15-17): \_\_\_\_\_

Name and Location of the Club where youth completed the Training and Field Workshop: \_\_\_\_\_

Date(s) of Training and Field Workshop: \_\_\_\_\_

**I, \_\_\_\_\_, hereby certify that the youth named above has successfully completed both the Shooting Training and Field Workshop components of the Massachusetts Young Adult Turkey Program.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Signature of Club Program Coordinator*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Date*

## **Request for Turkey Hunting Safety Kits**

Club name and address:

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Contact person: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone number: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Fax number: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

Proposed date of pre-hunt field workshop:

\_\_\_\_\_

Anticipated number of participants \_\_\_\_\_

*Participation must be open to the general public and not just club members.*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature and title

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**Emergency Medical Authorization Form**  
**CLUBS PLEASE KEEP, DO NOT SEND TO MDFW**

***(TO BE COMPLETED BY PARENT/ LEGAL GUARDIAN)***

Please attach to this completed form a copy of your child's health insurance card to facilitate prompt authorization of medical treatment in the case of an emergency.

Youth participant's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Alternate phone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Doctor: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Health insurance: \_\_\_\_\_ Policy #: \_\_\_\_\_

Residential parent or legal guardian: \_\_\_\_\_

Mother's name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Father's name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Alternate relative or childcare provider: \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Known allergies: \_\_\_\_\_

Last tetanus shot: \_\_\_\_\_

Additional information/ special instructions: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Signature of parent/legal guardian

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Date

**I would like to VOLUNTEER to help with the**  
**Young Adult Turkey Hunt Program**

Please complete and return this form to the  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Club.

Your name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

The best times to reach me are: \_\_\_\_\_

- ☐ I would like to help with the shooting instruction and practice component of the program.
- ☐ I would like to help with the pre-hunt field workshop.
- ☐ I would like to mentor a youth hunter on the turkey hunt.
- ☐ I would like to help demonstrate the proper techniques for field dressing a wild turkey.
- ☐ I have an appropriate, safe and reliable shotgun that can be borrowed by a young hunter for any or all parts of the program including the hunt.
- ☐ I would like to volunteer to help with the program, please tell me how I can best assist.

*-See next page for Volunteer Conduct Guidelines-*

## **Volunteer Conduct Guidelines**

As a volunteer for the \_\_\_\_\_ Club, I agree to conduct myself in a professional manner and help to maintain a safe, positive environment for all program participants.

### **I will not:**

- Use illegal drugs or alcohol at any time before or during the program.
- Wear clothing that displays offensive or inappropriate language or graphics.
- Engage in any offensive or inappropriate behavior with any program participant.
- Use profane or degrading language.
- Lobby for or promote private, political or religious causes, or distribute material that does not meet the approval of the sponsoring Club.
- Deliberately take actions that place a program participant or volunteer in an unsafe situation, regardless of whether the activity results in harm or injury.

I have read and understand these guidelines and promise to fully comply with them.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Volunteer's signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



## **List of Participating Clubs/Organization**

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*Please visit the MassWildlife webpage to view an updated listing of participating clubs and organizations:*

[http://www.mass.gov/dfwele/dfw/education/yath/yath\\_home.htm](http://www.mass.gov/dfwele/dfw/education/yath/yath_home.htm)

### **Program Contacts:**

**Astrid Huseby; MA. Division of Fisheries and Wildlife (508) 389-6305**  
**e-mail: [astrid.huseby@state.ma.us](mailto:astrid.huseby@state.ma.us)**

**Phil McCarthy; MA. Chapter NWTf (978) 979-5020**  
**e-mail: [flufffizzy@aol.com](mailto:flufffizzy@aol.com)**